

GENOWA ECHO

ENDLESS POTENTIAL

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A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF HOMA BAY



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A Message from The **CECM COMMUNICATIONS**



GRACE MERCY OSEWE (MRS)

CECM COMMUNICATIONS

This 16th edition of Genowa Echo features a special component. We have introduced an op-ed in our publication and this first piece has been done by our managing editor Lawrence Magware. However, we will be welcoming articles from both our contributors and readers for our subsequent publications. This is one of our many strategies to improve the quality and taste of our premier county publication.

Our lead story about the construction of a new county headquarters captures this month's mood and tone of this publication. The County Headquarters will be the seat of power, service delivery and development further reaffirming our resolve to transform this county and make it competitive within the league of other counties, just as H.E Gladys Wanga promised during the run-up to the last elections.

Over the last month, we made tremendous efforts to restore the livelihoods of our people affected by floods and other natural calamities, showcasing our resilience and readiness to respond to the distress. We have captured the stories about them and appreciate the partners who volunteered to help.

There are also news items that made the cut from the departments including the multisectoral environment conservation, the upcoming upgrade of ROSH and health records skilling and so much more.

Flip the pages and enjoy your read!

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GOVERNANCE: COUNTY TO HAVE NEW HEADQUARTERS AS GOVERNOR DELIVERS THE ROADMAP FOR TRANSFORMATION

GROUND-BREAKING CEREMONY FOR NEW HOMA BAY COUNTY HEADQUARTERS



Artistic impressions of the proposed new county headquarters

By Steven Muga

The County Government of Homa Bay, in collaboration with the County Pension Fund, has officially broken ground on the New Homa Bay County Headquarters at Arujo, marking a significant milestone in the county's development. This transformative project aims to create a modern and efficient facility to serve the people of Homa Bay for generations.

The construction of the New County Headquarters represents a crucial step in the region's growth, facilitated through an innovative tenant purchase model. This model ensures flexible and long-term financial support from the County Pension Fund, enabled by the County Infrastructure Financing Fund Act of 2023. This act exemplifies Homa Bay's commitment to sustainable and forward-thinking infrastructure development.

The new facility will significantly enhance the administrative capabilities of Homa Bay County, providing a state-of-the-art environment for public service and governance. It will accommodate over



Governor Wanga tests the excavator during the groundbreaking ceremony at Arujo

1,000 public servants and will include features such as amphitheater, a lactation room for mothers, a one-stop county service center, executive and departmental offices, and other essential government components.

H.E Governor Gladys Wanga expressed her excitement, stating, "We are thrilled to commence the construction of the New Homa Bay County Headquarters, a project that will significantly improve our administrative infrastructure and service delivery. This initiative reflects our dedication to fostering sustainable development and enhancing the quality of life for our residents." The ground-breaking ceremony was attended

by key stakeholders, including county officials, representatives from the County Pension Fund, community leaders, and members of the public. Approval from the National Land Commission for the land lease to the County Pension Fund was a crucial milestone, enabling this development.

This project showcases the County Government of Homa Bay's innovative financial strategies, allowing for efficient resource allocation while meeting long-term infrastructure needs without compromising financial stability. The new headquarters is set to become a center for service delivery and development, benefiting the citizens of Homa Bay for years to come.



Governor Wanga, and other guests admire the designs of the new county headquarters

OP-ED: KOBALA GIRLS' EU HEROICS BORNE OF GOVERNOR WANGA'S GO-GETTING CHARACTER

By Lawrence Magware

Every year on May 9, the 27-member European Union celebrate Europe Day, the anniversary of the Schuman Declaration of 1950 which set the stage for the establishment of a new political and economic cooperation among the European countries. This year, the Europe Day had an extra significance as it also marked the 20th anniversary

of the bloc's historic 2004 enlargement when ten countries joined to make it arguably the leading trading bloc in the world.

In its expansion, so has been its influence in world trade and economic discourse, often shaping the agenda of informal groupings of world powers such



Photo Credit: Livone Molo

Kobala Girls football team celebrate winning the Europe Day Tournament

as G7 and G20. In the process, Kenya has been a leading beneficiary of these initiatives, culminating into the signing of Kenya-EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) last year, which is premised to ensure, among other things, Kenya's largely farm produce exports continue to access EU markets duty- and quota-free.

Ordinarily, like has been the case over the years, there would have been nothing to write about on Europe Day, especially from a native of Homa Bay perspective, but we are now a big part of the diaspora activities of the celebrations and marveling as champions as well. It is a transformation, meticulously borne and executed by Governor Gladys Wanga. This is one of the immediate fruits of the Governor's overtures to reposition the county, not only on the national look-of-things but also to the broader networks, including to the EU, the US among others.

First year of her administration was planting. No county has rivalled Homa Bay in hosting foreign envoys, visiting to explore the county's enormous socioeconomic potential. The zenith of it all was the visit by 6 envoys from the Europe's leading economies including the EU leadership, Germany, France, Sweden, Austria and Poland in March this year where it was revealed that Homa Bay would be among the four counties participating in the Europe Day activities. Now we start seeing fruits! 15 youngsters have a chance for a one whole week training in the Romanian National Soccer Team Camp. They will have a chance to impress scouts and may land professional stints abroad.

The ongoing works in Ndhiwa on the Acakoro Sports

Academy will usher in one of the biggest sports infrastructures in the region once completed. It is another fruit of Governor Wanga's networking and will provide additional opportunity for youngsters to hone their talents as they pursue education. Dr Christian Fellner was one of the first envoys to visit Homa Bay County at the nascent of Governor Wanga's regime, and his country's funded project will be a huge transformation on sports, talent and education in the county.

As we loud Ambassador Henriette Geiger, the EU envoy to Kenya for extending this special recognition to Homa Bay, and as we will be cheering Europe Day Tournament most valuable player Siplender Mmboga's excursion trip to Brussels, Belgium, we remain cognizant that all these would have not been possible had Governor Wanga not gone out of her way to market this beloved county and make it as competitive among the league of counties, just as she promised she would do in her Genowa Manifesto. Youth and talent development was a key pillar in her campaigns, and she is already delivering the goodies.





Photo Credit: Livone Molo

Governor Wanga honours the parade mounted in her honour by the county reinforcement officers

GOVERNOR WANGA MAKES SPECIAL ADDRESS TO THE ASSEMBLY, REVEALS HER TRANSFORMATION AGENDA

By Lawrence Magware

Homa Bay County Governor H.E Gladys Wanga reiterated her transformational agenda and roadmap for the county during her second address to a special sitting of the county assembly early last month. Governor Wanga said that despite the challenges occasioned by natural calamities, erratic disbursement from the exchequer and high expectations from the people, the State of the County is strong, and the people remain resilient and hopeful.

While referencing her first address last year where she detailed the measures her government had taken in cutting a break with the past and adopting new ways of delivering services, she sought to ask the Assembly to walk with the executive the journey under the theme of Unveiling the Transformation: Homa Bay's Journey to Endless Potential.

"Our focus remain on making Homa Bay the top investment and tourist destination while improving the lives and livelihoods of our people. We are

deliberate in our programs, activities, and policies to achieve these goals," the county chief said as she delved into enumerating the programs and activities her administration has undertaken since she took over the reins in August 2022.



Photo Credit: Livone Molo

Governor Wanga is escorted into the chambers by Speaker Julius Gaya and other assembly orderlies



The Executive and the Assembly pose for a group photo after the address

In the address, Hon Wanga listed the success of the second Homa Bay International Investment Conference where the county government signed investment MoUs with 10 prospective investors and he highlighted the steps the administration is undertaking to actualize the investments. Additionally, she enthused the gazettement of Riwa City as a special economic zone as the single-most game changer in transforming Homa Bay County from a consumer to a producer county, with an eye for the international market.

There was also a mention of 255 kilometers of new roads in the entire County with 40 new roads under the ward-based program, maintenance of 580 kilometers of county roads and construction of three-foot bridges to ease connectivity. The

ambitious Fins to Swim Scholarship, now in its second year, with over 500 students already benefitting also got a mention besides the human capital development initiative of Fundi Mangula Scholarship.

While underscoring the importance of these programs, including the transformation in the health sector, agricultural value production, good governance and increased revenue collection and enhanced systems, Governor Wanga sought to rally the legislature and her executive team to continue pulling together, saying that a government is like a ship – those on board either perish together or survive together.

MADARAKA DAY: HOMA BAY TAKES PART IN THE NATIONAL DAY'S CELEBRATIONS

By Communication Team

Homa Bay County joined the rest of the country in the 61st anniversary of Madaraka Day with the leadership embracing the rallying call to champion agriculture and food security excellence as the nation's agenda. The event, held at the Kalango Grounds in Rangwe was



DG Oyugi Magwanga and County Commissioner Moses Lilan honour a match out parade during the celebrations



Photo Credit: Veroncia Nyasoro

DG Magwanga and MP Dr. Lilian Gogo conferring during the ceremonies

presided over by the Deputy Governor Hon Oyugi Magwanga, County Commissioner Mr. Moses Lilan and the area MP Hon Dr. Lilian Gogo and attended by residents and senior government officials from both the county and state.

In a speech read on her behalf by her deputy, Governor Gladys Wanga said that to combat ignorance, diseases and poverty, to elevate the fortunes of Homa Bay County residents, to end poverty once and for all, and to escalate socio-economic emancipation, her administration has shifted its focus and is putting its efforts on agriculture adding, "Sustainable agriculture is the key to overcoming poverty and disease and developing our education infrastructure. Food security is essential for dignified living."

She elaborated on what the county government is already doing to enhance not only agriculture for food but also as an enabler of economic development, reiterating her commitment to transform Homa Bay County from a consumer County to a producer. This, she said, will be achieved if the citizens embrace immersing themselves into agriculture, agribusiness and agri-industrialization, with the key value chains of cotton, edible oils and fish portending to be key that would unlock the productivity potential of the county.

While pitching for the recently launched Pamba Mwandu Program, the governor said the project aims to revitalize cotton production and processing

in Homa Bay County with a focus of directly and indirectly benefitting over 35,000 residents within the cotton value chain in the county. The government is already distributing 10MT of seeds to over 4,030 farmers, with the county having spent over Kshs 27 million on BT cotton seeds as part of the program.

Both Commissioner Lilan and Dr. Lilian Gogo however urged the residents to watch on security, with Rangwe subcounty currently recording the highest number of homicides, murder and gender-based violence in the county.



Photo Credit: Veroncia Nyasoro

Girl Guides pass by the main dias during the match out parade

AGRICULTURE: LAUNCH OF PAMBA MWANDU TO REVIVE COUNTY'S COTTON PRODUCTION

By Lawrence Magware



Photo Credit: Livone Molo

Homa Bay County's aim to be both production and market leader in the textile and apparel industry got a boost after Governor Wanga launched the audacious Pamba Mwandu Program. This project aims to revitalize cotton production and processing in Homa Bay County. The current land under cotton production is 20,000 acres and we already have 40,000 of land registered for cotton farming though ultimately, our aim is to increase it to 60,000 acres this year. Most importantly, we have a potential of over 200,000 acres of land suitable for cotton production.

While presiding over the launch, which also included distribution of cotton seeds to farmer cooperatives and smallholders, the county chief said her government has laid down meticulous plans key among them is the distribution of the Bt Cotton seeds to farmers and the improvement of agricultural extension services. She added that these will boost cotton production per hectare from the current 700Kgs to approximately 1200 Kgs setting the county towards producing enough cotton for the establishment of a cotton ginning factory.

All the 33,000 registered cotton farmers received as much seeds as the acreage they listed, with the county having spent over Kshs 30 million to avail these 8 tons of Bt cotton seeds.

Pamba Mwandu looks into benefitting over 90,000 households within the cotton value chain

in the County hence mitigating poverty through job creation. "Am delighted to announce that my administration has renewed its focus on the cotton industry recognizing its potential to contribute to economic growth and rural development," the governor said adding that the county aims to establish large-scale cotton farming while utilizing modern farming techniques, including drip irrigation, precision agriculture, and BT cotton varieties, to ensure high yields and sustainable production.

This development follows the other interventions already done with the cotton farming revival including Kshs. 70M in 6 tractors and implements for production farm mechanization, 150 tones capacity of seed cotton storage facility and farmers' manned cotton production network of 14 registered cotton growers' co-operative societies across the county with over 8,000 memberships.



Photo Credit: Livone Molo



Photo Credit: Livone Molo

INFRASTRUCTURE: GOVERNOR WANGA LAUNCHES INFRASTRUCTURE REBUILD AFTER THE FLOODS

By Communication Team



Photo Credit: Livone Molo

1. Governor Wanga cuts the ribbon to officially open the newly constructed ECS block at Yiembe Primary School in Kosewe

With the Kenya Metrological Department forecasting a reduction-to-near end of the heavy rains that caused havoc in the country over March and April, Governor Gladys Wanga has launched a rapid response initiative to repair and maintain roads, reopen access to key institutions, and repair ECD centers affected by floods as part of rebuilding the physical infrastructures, roads, and other amenities that

were damaged or destroyed by the floodings.

The works include reopening access roads to key facilities such as hospitals and schools, culverting and erecting bridges across the road cut-offs, desilting and diking of rivers to forestall future flooding as well as major repairs on public facilities that might have been damaged by the floods.

While launching the program at Pedo Health Center in Homa Bay Aruju when she flagged the construction of a 2.1km access road to the facility, the county chief revealed that her administration has set aside KES 400 million, being KES 10 million for each ward to repair and construct roads as has been prioritized by the members of the community. She said a further KES 67 million will be spent on infrastructure cutting across wards saying, "These efforts aim to restore normalcy so our people can resume their lives and livelihoods."

The Pedo Hospital access road will entail road formation, grading, gravelling and drainage works, as well as slope and soil protection, works so it can give full accessibility to the facility that serves Pedo, Misita, Lala and Shauri Yako areas of Homa Bay Town. In the same breath, the governor also initiated the construction of access road to Nyarut Dispensary in Kochia.

The opening of Got Kokech-Oneno Nam-Kopiyo-Nyalkinyi-Rangwena River Road is a game changer within Homa Bay East. The road is a virgin road that has never been opened before and would be a major boost to the socioeconomic well-being of the communities within and around the trading centers and villages of Got Kokech, Kopiyo and Nyalkinyi besides serving as a major access to the Nyalkinyi Health Center. It will also create connectivity and accessibility to the agricultural farms within the area.

It was also a twin blessing to the communities of Kanyamwa Kosewe as Governor Wanga opened the newly constructed two-block ECD classrooms at Yiembe Comprehensive School and a hospital block at Odaso Health Center. The four modern classrooms replaced the earthen structure that was declared inhabitable after the heavy rains rendered it obsolete. It will serve over 170 Early Years learners registered in the school. The new block at Odaso will house the pharmacy, clinical and laboratory rooms as the hospital bids to become a sub-county hospital.



ENERGY: GOVERNOR, MPS MEET ENERGY CHIEFS TO ADDRESS POWER ISSUES IN THE COUNTY

By Livone Molo

Governor Gladys Wanga early last month led a host of members of parliament from the county and other leaders for high-level talks with Hon. Davis Chirchir, the CS Energy and Petroleum, Dr. Rose Mkalama, CEO of Rural Electrification and Renewable Energy Corporation (REREC), Kenya Power's General Manager for Infrastructure Ken Owino, and other energy stakeholders.

The focus of the meeting was to find ways to improve

electricity and power supply in the county with a target of achieving not only last-mile connectivity but also ensuring stable and reliable connectivity to help local businesses thrive and improve security in our towns and markets across the county.

Energy is one of the key enablers of Kenya's Vision 2030 development programs. Kenya treats energy security as a matter of national priority. The two levels of government identify energy as the country's driver into "a newly-industrializing, middle-income



Photo Credit: Livone Molo



Photo Credit: Livone Molo

rate so that socio-economic transformation can be felt by communities across the country,” she said.

REREC’s new strategic plan launched in 2022 aligns perfectly with the government’s commitment to attaining universal access to electricity by the year 2026 and achieving universal access to modern and clean cooking, by 2028; two (2) years ahead of the global goal set out in SDG 7.

The governor’s team presented a list of the areas in Homa Bay County that both REREC and KPLC need to move with speed to address their power situation. These places include the islands of Mfangano, Takawiri, Kiwa, Remba and Ringiti, Kanyamwa Kologi, West Karachuonyo, Kibiri and Kanyaluo among others.

economy, providing a high quality of life to all its citizens in a clean and secure environment” And consider access to competitively-priced, reliable, quality, safe and sustainable energy as an essential ingredient for the country’s social –economic development right from the grassroots.

Dr. Mkalama revealed that the Corporation will re-orient its project implementation cycle, end-to-end for efficiency and effectiveness so that the Corporation can continue being responsive to emerging community needs and support Government programs effectively, adding that Homa Bay being a rural county sits at the top in the priority list of areas REREC plans to robustly invest in. “Identification of electrification projects shall take cognizance of areas that have a low connectivity



Photo Credit: Livone Molo

HEALTHCARE: FOCUS SHIFTS TO RELIABILITY AND VERIFIABILITY OF INDICATORS REPORTING



COUNTY, UNICEF PARTNER TO STREAMLINE PMTCT DATA REPORTING

By Lawrence Magware



The County government of Homa Bay, partnering with UNICEF has moved in to address data discrepancies, inaccuracy, inconsistency, and incompleteness generated in current data management systems, as well as

systemic issues affecting the quality of Prevention and Elimination of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV, Syphilis and Hepatitis B data reported from the health facilities in the county.

At a workshop that brought together all the sub-county medical officers, their health records counterparts and both the county and sub-county AIDS and STI coordinators, the National PMTCT Manager at NASCOP Dr. Nelly Ndidi reiterated the global child welfare organization's support to the county's endeavors at not only adequate reporting of the data but also the efforts towards eliminating the triple transmission of HIV, Syphilis and Hepatitis B from mother to child by 2027 saying, "The data quality issues may impede the county's ability to effectively generate data that is useful for decision making in the PMTCT program."

The workshop at Cold Springs Hotel also revealed that addressing data discrepancy, inaccuracy, inconsistency and incompleteness will ensure the generation of more trustworthy information for assessing the impact of PMTCT initiatives and identifying areas for improvement.

Homa Bay County has a 5.3 per cent mother-to-child transmission rate against an expected under 5 per cent and a complete elimination by 2027,



Photo Credit: Veroncia Nyasoro

with this data not easily verifiable due to the cited inaccuracies, incompleteness and incorrectness occasioned by lack of a clear framework and tools for reporting the all-important statistics. Additionally, 120,600 people live with HIV in Homa Bay with children below the age of 14 accounting for 5,565 of the number, most of whom got infected through the transmission from their mothers either during pregnancy, at birth or during breastfeeding.

The quality PMTCT data that can be used for decision-making at all levels in the country and the impact of change on the triple elimination of vertical transmission of HIV, Syphilis and Hepatitis B in Kenya would mean improved accuracy in PMTCT data, enhanced monitoring and evaluation of PMTCT programs, informed decision-making

for PMTCT interventions, optimized resource allocation for PMTCT, identification of gaps in PMTCT data reporting, increased accountability in PMTCT programs and enhanced community engagement in PMTCT.

The plan involves key strategic interventions including holding consultative meetings with County and sub-County Health Management Information System departments on training needs on PMTCT data entry and validation for healthcare workers, conducting a rapid assessment on the post-natal clinic PMTCT indicators training needs and Training mother and child health care workers and health records and information officers PMTCT indicators

COUNTY, UNIONS BROKER DEAL ON HEALTHCARE WORKERS PROMOTIONS

By Veroncia Nyasoro

The County government of Homa Bay and the Health Workers Union leaders have promoted 336 healthcare workers.

“After a long conversation with the health workers, we agreed with the unions that we will all work together to improve the health system,” said county secretary, Prof. Ben Muok while witnessing the signing of the agreement between the county’s public service board and the Union over the deal.

The promotion of 336 medical practitioners is part of the broader program that will eventually see 900 officers getting promotion, confirmation, and redesignation. The agreement includes promoting



Photo Credit: Veroncia Nyasoro

all the healthcare workers within the period that they agreed and will be done in phases, and the first phase 336 letters of promotion were issued for all the categories that involve the doctors, clinical officers, and nurses.

The promotion benefitted those who had worked for a period of 19 years without promotion, confirmation, and redesignation.

“As the Public Service Board, we will make sure that there is no backlog on stagnation of promotion, confirmation and redesignation.” Said the county Public Service Board chairman Isaiah Okoto.

The county government of Homa Bay is focused on human resource-related matters including career progression, improved working conditions, better schemes of service and continuous supply of vital health commodities to all facilities.

GOVERNMENT ENHANCES DRUG SUPPLY TO HOSPITALS TO ENHANCE HEALTHCARE PROVISION



By Veroncia Nyasoro

The County Government of Homa Bay has maintained its quarterly supply of health technologies and pharmaceutical products to sub-county and lower-level hospitals in full recognition of the importance of medical products for serving its needy population. This quarter, the government supplied pharmaceuticals, non-pharmaceuticals, dental, and laboratory supplies to Rachuonyo County Hospital in Oyugis.

“We consistently aim to ensure a steady availability of essential commodities in all our public health facilities,” said the Chief Officer for Health and Sanitation, Dr. Kevin Osuri. He also encouraged the public to continue seeking services from the facilities since the supply will sustain the current crises of patients missing drugs within the facility. “The county government’s commitment is to provide an effective medication supply system within the facilities,” he affirmed.

Homa Bay County early last year enacted the Facilities Improvement Financing Act to support the respective public health facilities’ optimal operations for effective service delivery throughout the financial year besides ensuring readily available financial resources for the purchase and acquisition of urgent goods and services at the respective health facility, enhancing, where applicable, the accessibility and predictability of finances for procurement of essential products, commodities and technologies. The Act also ensures that health services are available, accessible, acceptable, affordable, of good quality and standard, guarantees that health facilities are optimally resourced to offer quality care to all patients and facilitates primary health care and preventive services at the community level.

GIRLCHILD: GOVERNMENT AIMS TO EASE BURDEN OF MENSTRUAL HYGIENE AND STIGMA ON ADOLESCENT GIRLS



Photo Credit: Courtesy

By Communication Team

The County Government of Homa Bay, working with partners within the health and gender welfare spaces has committed to address the challenges the school-going teenage girls during their menstrual cycles as a mechanism to contain them in schools and to eliminate the stigma associated with menstruation.

Speaking at Kotieno Primary School in Rachuonyo South during the occasion to mark this year's Menstrual Hygiene Day, Governor Gladys Wanga affirmed her administration's commitment to address poor menstrual health and hygiene which undermines fundamental rights for women and girls, worsening social and economic inequalities in a speech read on her behalf by CEC Member for Sports, Gender Inclusivity, and Social Services, Hon. Sarah Malit. The county boss also noted that gender inequality, extreme poverty, humanitarian crises and harmful traditions can amplify deprivation and stigma and thus there must be a concerted effort from all the stakeholders to address menstrual hygiene in the county.

This year's theme of "Together for a Period-Friendly World," aligns with Homa Bay County's commitment and is embedded in Kenya's Menstrual

Hygiene Management (MHM) policy and strategy. The agenda aims to create a society where no one is hindered because of menstruation, ensuring everyone can manage it safely, hygienically, confidently, and without shame.

Participants at the event learnt that comprehensive approaches that combine education with infrastructure and with products and efforts to tackle stigma are most successful in achieving good menstrual health. Further, lack of information amongst adolescent girls and women about their reproductive health and menstrual hygiene



Photo Credit: Courtesy

causes panic, anxiety, and embarrassment due to bad odor, urinary tract and pelvic inflammatory disease, leading to shame which ultimately leads to infringement of girl's dignity.

It was highlighted that most girls always miss school and eventually drop out due to menstrual-related issues. By ensuring that girls can manage their menstrual health effectively, the stakeholders can help the girls improve their school attendance, academic performance and overall well-being this fostering a more inclusive and equitable education environment.

"Through the help from the partners, girls and boys are educated on the menstrual hygiene and also

they get the awareness and understanding more on the menstruation." Ms. Sarah added.

At least one in every 10 girls miss school and eventually drops out due to menstrual-related issues. Currently, in Kenya, significant barriers to the menstrual hygiene management approach persist with particular challenges in low-income families where 65% of the girls and women are unable to afford sanitary towels, while 42% have never accessed or used sanitary towels. To address these issues the county government plans a multi-faceted approach, including improving access to menstrual hygiene products, enhancing school infrastructure, providing menstrual education, and promoting supportive policies.



Photo Credit: Courtesy

DISASTER: COUNTY REELING FROM FLOOD DISASTERS, LOSS OF LIVES

By Communication Team

Homa Bay County was one of the regions in Kenya that bore the most brunt of the recent flooding that ravaged most parts of the country, leaving wanton destruction of property, scores injured and many dead or still missing.

In Homa Bay, flush floods affected Sindu Town in Kaksingri West Ward, several parts of Rachuonyo North sub-county, and Lambwe Valley and there was also lake water backflow that displaced households on Remba and Sikri islands in Suba North.

While giving a special address to the County Assembly, Governor Gladys Wanga expressed her regret at the turn of events but applauded her team and the entire interagency coordinating teams that responded swiftly to mitigate the disaster and offer humanitarian support to the victims.

Apart from the four lives that the floods claimed in Sindu, roads infrastructure, shelter, farms and economic mainstays were not spared either. 4,506 households with 22,530 individuals, hundreds of acres of land with crops, livestock and property

were swept away. “We appeal to well-wishers to assist the affected households and call on the National Government to release the Disaster and Emergency Funds for mitigation measures,” the county chief said

As floods continued to wreak havoc across the country, the county government worked tirelessly with humanitarian organizations and like-minded individuals to support the people in need. The county explored partnership with the National Government and community-based disaster

response teams, to deliver crucial supplies to households sheltered at Osodo Primary and Secondary schools in Central Karachuonyo, Simbi-Dispensary, Sindo Primary, Yongo Primary and Ndhuru Dispensary among others.

Consequently, the county government took full charge of the funeral and burial arrangements of the four lives from the Sindo floods before gathering at Wadianga for their joint funeral service. The four were Alice Kerubo (45), Moses Otieno (12), Calvin Otieno (7), and Florence Otieno (5)



Photo Credit: Livone Molo

CONSERVATION: EFFORTS UNDERWAY TO INCREASE COUNTY'S FOREST COVER, CONSERVE NATURAL FORESTS

By Wycliffe Ochieng

The county government of Homa Bay has escalated its environmental conservation efforts and climate change mitigation through a comprehensive tree planting program. The noble cause aims to ensure that the county restores its forest cover which now stands at between 10% to 30% and to increase tree cover from 2.8% to at least 30%.

As part of this undertaking the county government led by Governor Gladys Wanga participated in the National Tree Growing Day where over 100,000



Photo Credit: Livone Molo

seedlings were planted, alongside the Cabinet Secretary for Roads, Transport, and Public Works Kipchumba Murkomen, PSs Raymond Omollo (Interior) and Eng Mbugua (Roads) on Gembe Hills as part of reafforesting the county's largest biggest water tower. This step, the Governor said, is significant in avoiding climatic adversities that arise due to overarching human activities besides helping the county in working towards maintaining ecological equilibrium and environmental resilience within the ecosystem.

Further, the county through CECM for Environment Dr Joash Aloo announced the successful planting of 7,600 seedlings in Koderia Forest through a partnership with the Kenya Forest Service and active involvement from the local community, aiming to address deforestation and increase the forest cover from 10 per cent to 30 per cent.

Speaking at the event, Dr. Aloo Joash emphasized the significance of the tree planting initiative in Koderia Forest, which has suffered from deforestation due to the destruction of trees. The partnership with the Kenya Forest Service was instrumental in planting the seedlings, with the County Government's deliberate efforts to improve forest cover.



Photo Credit: Livone Molo

"Most of the water catchment areas are suffering from deforestation, and it is an individual's responsibility to plant more trees," said Dr. Aloo.

Similar exercise was also conducted at the Ogade Special School where, under the leadership of Ag. Director for Social Services Ms. Lucy Odwar, the special needs students at the school teamed up with the local community to plant over 1,000 trees within the school's catchment.

FISHERIES: GOODIES GALORE AS THE COUNTY CELEBRATES ANNUAL AQUACULTURE DAY!



Photo Credit: Oketch Bernard

By Oketch Bernard

The County Government of Homa Bay, through the Aquaculture Business Development Program (ABDP), celebrated the County Annual Aquaculture Day at Kadongo Market, Rachuonyo East Sub-County. This year's theme was "Investing in Climate-Smart Aquaculture for Prosperity."

The ABDP program has increased household incomes for many families, provided nutritious food, and aided in poverty eradication throughout Homa Bay County. It has various components focused on improving the productivity and incomes of smallholders within the County. The program mobilizes and sensitizes communities to aquaculture-related



Photo Credit: Oketch Bernard

opportunities through different measures, including the formation of Smallholders Aquaculture Groups (SAGs). The beneficiaries have enjoyed training and capacity building tailored to their specific needs, aiding in improving aquaculture productivity. So far, Homa Bay County can boast over 2200 beneficiaries in aquaculture ponds. Plans are in top gear to expand the operations from fish ponds to cages; in this regard, about 2200 farmers will benefit across the county.

Speaking at the event, Deputy Governor H.E. Joseph Oyugi Magwanga appreciated ABDP for their progress. "Aquaculture, a major project implemented by the Aquaculture Business Development Program (ABDP) in Homa Bay County, has increased household income for many families. As a result, parents can now take better care of their children, provide them with nutritious food, eradicate poverty, create employment, offer quality education, and meet their economic needs," he said.

On their part, the Program beneficiaries could not hide their joy. They noted that the ABDP has significantly changed their lifestyles and the common narrative. Women, who previously engaged in risky behaviors such as prostitution – commonly referred to as 'sex-for-fish' – have since abandoned the practice. They can now rear fish in ponds and earn a living.

In his official remarks, the CECM for Blue Economy, Fisheries, Mining, and Digital Economy, Dr. John Agili, acknowledged the milestones achieved by

the Aquaculture Business Development Program (ABDP) in fostering aquaculture in Homa Bay County. "The county government, during the last financial year, supported fish farmers with predator kits to supplement the good work done by ABDP. This has led to increased fish productivity in the county." He added that the ABDP team is now focused on expanding from fish ponds to fish cages, with plans underway to establish 24 cages across the county.



Photo Credit: Oketch Bernard



Photo Credit: Oketch Bernard



SPORTS: MAJOR FACELIFT, EXPANSION MARKED FOR ROSH

By Lawrence Magware

The second phase of the construction of the Raila Odinga Stadium in Homa Bay is set to begin in earnest. The stadium, the biggest sports facility in Southern Nyanza will be upgraded to accommodate 10,000 seated-capacity in the new plan after Governor Gladys Wanga struck a deal with the national government to support the initiative.

After a successful meeting with Sports Kenya leadership where the sides agreed in principle that the facility needs facelift and expansion, a joint technical team from both the State Department of Public Works and Sports Kenya trooped to Homa Bay for a site inspection to plan and ascertain the scope of work that would be involved in the second phase construction that should enhance the stadium's attractiveness to host national and international events thus enhancing the stadium's status as a top-tier venue for athletics and indoor games, benefiting the people of Homa Bay and advancing sports infrastructure development in the region.

Opened in June last year, ROSH has become not only a major landmark in Homa Bay Town but also a major sports and ceremonial venue ever since despite its current 2000 capacity. Key notable events that have been held in the stadium are the inaugural Sigand Nyinam Convention, the 2023 Genowa Governor's Cup Tournament finals, the NCKK inter-mission schools' extravaganza and the County Enforcement Officers Passout parade among others. Additionally, the stadium serves as the primary home venue for Kenya Premier League side Shabana and an auxiliary home to both Gor Mahia and Muhoroni Youth.

The second phase will involve erecting three additional canopied terraces around the stadium, laying an athletic tartan track, constructing a recreational children's swimming pool, opening six additional gates around the perimeter wall, constructing an indoor arena as well as constructing a training annex as well as establishing an adequate parking bay. The enhance capacity will also make it ready to host next year's Mashujaa Day celebrations.



Menstrual Hygiene Day
"Together for a Period Friendly Homa Bay"
Date: 28th May 2024
Venue: Kotieno Primary - Rachuonyo South Sub-county, Homa Bay

Creating a world where menstruation doesn't hold anyone back, and everyone, everywhere, is able to hygienically menstruate with both pride and dignity.

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